

pacity; while her mother, however bright,
 active, and thrifty,
 was not the woman to give unimpeachable
 advice on intricate
 legal questions. As for little Smile, now
 seven years old,
 he did not even know his letters; he spent
 happy, careless
 days in the sunshine, blissfully ignorant that
 trouble was
 assailing the home, and would some day
 destroy it. Yet
 it was he who, long years afterwards, avenged
 his father and
 his mother, in the only manner possibly in
 which they
 could be avenged. Perhaps it did not affect
 the despoilers
 personally; many of them, indeed, must have
 been dead at
 the time, and those who survived may have
 only sneered,
 for the gold was theirs. None the less the
 pictures of Aix
 and its society, traced in four or five volumes of
 the Eougon-
 Macquart novels, were instinct with
 retribution. Aix still
 raises ineffectual protests whenever it hears
 that name of
 Plassans which the novelist gave it, and
 which, though its
 origin was simple enough, — for it was merely a
 modification
 of Flassans, the name of a village near
 Brignoles, southeast
 of Aix,— acquired under Zola's caustic pen an
 element of
 opprobrium.

The displeasure of Aix in this respect has been the more marked as the city's past is not destitute of grandeur. One of the earliest stations of the Eomans in Gaul, it became the

metropolis of the Second Narbonensis; but its walls, porticoes, thermae, arena, and temples were largely destroyed when the Saracens sacked it in the eighth century, and few memorials of its classic era now exist. As the capital of Provence in the days of "good King Eudes," whose court was described by Scott in "Anne of Geierstein," Aix regained some lustre, followed half a century later by a period of trouble, many of its mediaeval monuments being wrecked